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ABSTRACT

Statistics on job tenure of American workers are presented which are based on a January, 1973, survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census. Three tables are presented: length of employment of workers on their current job, by sex; median years on current job, by sex, age, and race; and median years on current job, by occupation, industry, and sex. Among the broad interpretations of the data, it was noted that the length of job tenure is closely related to the sex and age of the workers, and, as workers age, the difference between the job tenure of men and women tends to widen. Median years on the current job varied for women by marital status. Job tenure for white and Negroes was about the same overall, but there were differences by sex. Self-employed persons had longer job tenure than wage and salary workers. Tenure was longest for farmers and farm managers. The occupation of shortest duration for men was nonfarm labor or service work; for women it was sales and service work. (AG)

SUMMARY
SPECIAL LABOR FORCE REPORT
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Job Tenure of American Workers, January 1973

One quarter of the 81 million employed in January 1973 had been working continuously for their current employer for 10 years or more, and a similar proportion for 1 year or less. (See table 1.) In 1963, about 30 percent of all workers had been with their employers for 10 years or more. The drop by 1973 is attributable in large part to the greater proportion of young workers under age 35 in the 1973 work force.

The length of job tenure is closely related to the sex and age of the workers. The length of time on the job varies directly with the age of the worker, but is less for women than for men at all ages over 24. (See table 2.) Also, as workers age, the difference between the job tenure of men and women tends to widen.

Overall, women averaged 2.8 years on the same job compared with 4.6 years for men. Among workers under age 25, women had about the same average job tenure as men. In these ages, the pattern of activity that affects job attachment apparently does not differ much by sex--many are still in school and hold temporary part-time jobs, while others no longer in school may be working on their first regular job. Among workers 25 to 34 years old, the average length for women was 1 year less than for men, 2.2 and 3.2 years, respectively. By age 55 to 64, women averaged 5.7 years less than men, 8.8 and 14.5 years, respectively. The widening

difference in tenure between men and women as they grow older is accounted for in part by the interruption in the women' s employment careers because of marriage and subsequent family responsibilities.

Median years on current job varied for women by marital status--1. 3 for single women, 3. 3 for wives and 4. 2 for widowed, divorced, and separated women. The variations were related to differences in age distributions of the women in these marital status groups--68 percent of the single women were under 25 compared with 15 percent of the wives, and 7 percent of the formerly married women--and the fact that younger persons who are recent entrants to the labor force could not have worked as many years at the same job as older ones. However, single women who were 25 and over, unlike wives and formerly married women of these ages, had been on their current job about equally as long as men in the same age group, reflecting their self-supporting status as well as freedom from family responsibilities.

Job tenure was about the same for Negroes as for whites overall, but there were differences by sex. The shorter median length of time on current job of Negro men compared with whites (4. 0 and 4. 7 years, respectively) was offset by the longer median years of Negro than white women (3. 3 and 2. 8 years, respectively). Among workers under age 25, there were no differences in job tenure between whites and Negroes for either men or women. However, Negro men in the older age groups had less time on the current job than white men in corresponding age categories, and the widest difference was among men 55 and over. The shorter job tenure of Negro men reflects their concentration in low-skilled occupations where jobs are often more casual than in other fields of work, and workers are more subject to layoffs. The longer tenure of Negro than white women can be explained in large part by the fact that they are in the work force more steadily than white women because of economic necessity.

Men and women operating their own businesses or farms had longer job tenure than wage and salary workers. (See table 3.) Self-employed persons tend to be older than wage and salary workers and they are less subject to breaks in employment than

the average wage worker. Job tenure was comparatively short for workers in the construction industry for such reasons as seasonal nature of the industry, changes in employers as projects are completed, and cyclical fluctuations in employment. The relatively short job duration for men and women in trade and service industries reflects not only the seasonal nature of these industries but also the fact that persons who want temporary or short duration work frequently obtain jobs in these two industries.

Among occupational groups, tenure was longest for persons employed as farmers and farm managers, reflecting the comparatively large numbers who were self-employed. In nonfarm occupations, job tenure was longest for managers and administrators, and for craft workers, both men and women. The long duration for managers reflects the comparatively large proportion who are age 45 and over and are self-employed. The long duration for craft workers undoubtedly reflects the greater stability of their jobs than those of other blue-collar workers. The shortest duration was for men working as nonfarm laborers or as service workers and for women sales and service workers.

These findings are based on data from the latest survey of Job Tenure of American Workers. This survey was conducted in January 1973 for the Bureau of Labor Statistics by the Bureau of the Census. Additional information will appear in a forthcoming issue of the Monthly Labor Review.

Table 1. Length of employment of workers on their current job, by sex, January 1973
(Persons 16 years old and over)

(Numbers in thousands)

Date current job started and length of time on job	Number employed in January 1973			Percent distribution		
	Both sexes	Men	Women	Both sexes	Men	Women
Total	81,043	49,945	31,098	100.0	100.0	100.0
July 1972 to January 1973:						
6 months or less	13,979	7,536	6,443	17.3	15.1	20.8
January to June 1972:						
7 to 12 months	6,312	3,653	2,659	7.8	7.3	8.5
January to December 1971:						
1 year but less than 2 years	9,623	5,239	4,384	11.9	10.5	14.1
January to December 1970:						
2 years but less than 3 years	6,559	3,704	2,855	8.1	7.4	9.2
January 1968 to December 1969:						
3 years but less than 5 years	10,776	6,469	4,307	13.3	13.0	13.8
January 1963 to December 1967:						
5 years but less than 10 years	13,242	8,364	4,878	16.3	16.8	15.7
January 1958 to December 1962:						
10 years but less than 15 years	7,145	4,773	2,372	8.8	9.6	7.6
January 1953 to December 1957:						
15 years but less than 20 years	4,828	3,410	1,418	6.0	6.8	4.6
January 1948 to December 1952:						
20 years but less than 25 years	3,677	2,807	870	4.5	5.6	2.8
Before January 1948:						
25 years or more	4,902	3,990	912	6.1	8.1	2.9
Median years on job	3.9	4.6	2.8	-	-	-

Table 2. Median years on current job, by sex, age, and race, January 1973

Age and race	Both sexes	Men	Women
AGE			
Total, 16 years and over	3.9	4.6	2.8
16 to 19 years	.6	.6	.6
20 to 24 years	1.2	1.2	1.2
25 to 34 years	2.8	3.2	2.2
35 to 44 years	5.2	6.7	3.6
45 to 54 years	8.6	11.5	5.9
55 to 64 years	11.9	14.5	8.8
65 years and over	12.6	13.9	10.9
White	3.9	4.7	2.8
Negro and other races	3.7	4.0	3.3

Table 3. Median years on current job, by occupation, industry, and sex, January 1973

Occupation and industry	Men	Women
Total, all workers	4.6	2.8
OCCUPATION		
Professional, technical, and kindred workers	4.8	3.4
Managers and administrators, except farm	6.4	5.0
Sales workers	3.7	1.9
Clerical and kindred workers	4.5	2.7
Craft and kindred workers	5.3	4.4
Operatives and kindred workers	4.0	3.3
Operatives, except transport	3.9	3.5
Transport equipment operatives	4.5	2.1
Laborers, except farm	2.1	2.0
Service workers	2.7	2.0
Farmers and farm managers	20.7	12.6
Farm laborers and supervisors	3.7	7.5
INDUSTRY		
Agriculture	11.5	7.6
Wage and salary workers	3.6	2.3
Self-employed workers	20.2	10.9
Unpaid family workers	3.9	13.6
Nonagricultural industries	4.5	2.8
Wage and salary workers	4.3	2.7
Mining	6.4	(1/)
Construction	2.7	2.4
Manufacturing	5.6	3.8
Transportation and public utilities	6.3	3.7
Wholesale and retail trade	2.6	1.8
Service and finance	3.0	2.7
Public administration	6.7	3.8
Self-employed workers	8.1	4.0
Unpaid family workers	(1/)	5.2

1/ Median not shown where base is less than 75,000.

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